

# **MINUTES**

## **SOUTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION BANK**

**Wednesday, May 20, 2020– 10:00 am**

**Via teleconference**

The South Carolina Conservation Bank Board (SCCB) held a quarterly meeting on Wednesday, May 20, 2020, at 10:00 am via teleconference. Notice of the date, time and place of the meeting was posted and mailed to the news media in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Chairman Michael McShane presided at the meeting and members present included Thomas Lavender, Vice-Chairman, Andrea Clark, Elliott Close, Geordy Johnson, Charles Lane, Curtis Spencer, Richmond Wilhoit, Jr., Keith Williamson, Larry Yonce; and Ex-Officio members Dr. Walt McPhail, SC Forestry Commission Chairman; Norman F. Pulliam, Chairman SCDNR; and Justin Hancock for Duane Parrish, Director for SCPRT Board Member absent was Brent McLaurin.

### **1) WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman McShane called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for their attendance.

### **2) ROLL CALL**

Chairman McShane asked Ms. Pennebaker to call roll of the Board Members. Ms. Pennebaker called roll and a quorum was established with 10 Board Members and 3 Ex-Officio members in attendance. Chairman McShane stated that proper public notice had been given for the meeting.

### **3) CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Chairman McShane established procedural protocol for this teleconference and then invited any members of the public to identify themselves.

### **4) PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. McShane opened the floor to anyone who would like to address to the Board. There being no public comments, Mr. McShane called for the next agenda item.

### **5) ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Mr. McShane stated the Board was sent a draft copy of the February 19, 2020, Quarterly Meeting minutes prior to the meeting for their review and that a copy was within the Board Member handouts. The Chairman asked for any additions, deletions, or corrections. There being none, the Chairman called for a motion to adopt the minutes from the February 19, 2020, meeting. Mr. Lane made the motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Clark seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

### **6) OLD BUSINESS**

Chairman McShane asked Mr. West to update the Board on the status of Approved Projects: This year, the Board has approved 31 projects, 18 of which have closed. There are 13 projects totaling approximately \$4.5 million (see Board packet). Mr. West stated that all applicants have confirmed that outstanding projects will close by end of fiscal year. Next, the Chairman asked Mr. West to deliver the Financial Report (see Board packet). The Chairman summarized by saying that SCCB has \$586,836.67 million in unobligated funds available for grants. Chairman McShane informed the Board that the Governor has signed a Continuing Resolution to authorize state agencies to use FY20 recurring dollars as their budgets for FY21, which begins 07/01/2020. The General Assembly will take up the budget when they reconvene in the Fall.

## 7) NEW BUSINESS

### a) Director's Updates

i) Online Application: Bank staff has been working with sc.gov to develop an on-line application. This digital platform will improve efficiencies and recordkeeping processes for applicants as well as staff. A draft version might be ready for the January 2021 cycle for testing purposes.

ii) GIS position: The Bank would like to split a GIS position with DNR. The Bank's share of the cost would be \$30,000 per year and the employee would be housed at DNR. Upon the Chairman's recommendation, staff agreed to withhold any commitments on this matter to the following fiscal year.

iii) New Office: The lease at the current office is expiring. New office space has been located in the Forest Drive area which will provide cost savings and improved availability of access. The Executive Committee has favorably reviewed the new lease. Mr. Lane made a motion to authorize the Director to execute the lease for 2711 Middleburg Dr., Suite 308 and for Bank staff to move forward with the relocation. Ms. Clark seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

iv) COVID-19 update: The Governor has issued a phased re-entry to the workplace plan. Bank staff will work within the framework of the plan to continue to provide agency services while still promoting and maintaining adequate social distancing measures to protect the health of Bank staff as well as the public and other stakeholders. The Bank will continue to follow the Governor's guidance related to workplace re-entry.

### b) Grants Review Committee Recommendations

Chairman McShane yielded the floor to Grants Review Committee Chairman Lavender for a review of pending applications. Mr. Lavender then began the review of applications for the current cycle:

#### **Chapman Bridge Oconee Bell Preserve**

Naturaland Trust submitted an application for \$630,000 to acquire 220 acres in fee simple in Oconee County. Mac Stone of Naturaland Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended funding this project \$550,000. Chairman McShane called for a vote to approve the recommendation and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Sandy Run Forest**

Upstate Forever submitted a change in funding request to a project approved at the 02/19/2020 Board meeting. Sandy Run Forest was approved (but not yet closed) as a conservation easement on 237.3 acres in Union County for \$130,000. The total project included an application for a NAWCA grant which has since not advanced in the federal application process. The landowners have offered to increase their donation, and Upstate Forever is requesting that the Bank increase its grant amount as well by \$25,000. Scott Park of Upstate Forever spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended increasing the grant amount by \$15,000 to a total of \$145,000. Considering the applicant's comments and updated information on the project, Charles Lane made a motion to support the applicant's initial request of \$25,000. Ms. Clark approved the motion as amended, and the motion passed unanimously.

### c) Coastal Grants

Chairman McShane referred the Board to the memorandum within the meeting handouts (see Board packet) and asked Mr. West to update the Board on coastal grants. The Coastal Wetlands program offers the Bank many opportunities to augment its budget as it provides grants up to \$1 million for individual projects. Both DNR and SCCB are authorized to apply for Coastal Wetlands Grants. At this time, Mr. West anticipates the sponsorship of 2-4 projects. Mr. West emphasized that the Bank's sponsorship of a project is in no way a guarantee of approval of applications to our own, separate grant funding program. Mr. West stated that, similar to the Bank's traditional grant program, the Grants Review Committee will review and score all individual applications to ensure consistency with the Bank's conservation priority objectives and will make recommendations to the Board.

#### **9) BOARD MEMBER OPEN DISCUSSION**

The Chairman invited Board members and staff to make any comments. Mr. West thanked Board for collaboration and the staff for their hard work as well as seamlessly maintaining agency services during COVID-19. Ms. Clark spoke in favor of the new office location. Mr. Pulliam stated that DNR enjoys and appreciates its relationship with SCCB.

#### **10) TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chairman stated that the next Board meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, September 9th at 10:00am. Chairman McShane recommends changing the date to either September 30<sup>th</sup> or October 7<sup>th</sup> to give the General Assembly time to review the FY21 budget and make any necessary adjustments. The Chairman asked Board members to indicate their date preference via email to Ms. Pennebaker. The Board will meet either in person or via teleconference depending on recommendations of the Governor at that time.

#### **11) ADJOURN**

The Chairman called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Clark made the motion, Mr. Lane seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.